

“Faith for Rights” commUNITY of practices

Fifth annual meeting (4-8 November 2024)

Peer-to-peer learning and action points



I. Overview

From 4 to 8 November 2024, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized the [fifth annual meeting](#) of the “Faith for Rights” commUNITY of practices. This hybrid meeting with overall more than 200 participants in Geneva and online facilitated ongoing dialogue and exchange of information with faith-based organizations, governments, parliamentarians, academic communities and the United Nations system, in line with Action 55 of the [Pact for the Future](#).

The participants discussed the peer-to-peer learning methodology used by various institutions, including in Abuja, Beirut, Cairo, Coimbra, Paris, Ottawa, Oxford, San José and Washington DC, to enhance skills and optimize the outcomes of relevant UN Treaty Bodies and Special Rapporteurs. The participants also shared 27 “Faith for Rights” projects (see [below under III](#)) as well as launched the second edition of the [#Faith4Rights toolkit](#) in Chinese, English, French and Spanish.

One thematic focus of the annual meeting was on promoting gender equality and freedom of religion or belief, including through the [CEDAW Knowledge Hub](#) and activities with the [Gandhi-King Global Academy](#) and [ACT Alliance](#). Another [roundtable](#) and [webinar](#) organized together with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the International Panel of Parliamentarians on Freedom of Religion or Belief brainstormed about countering instrumentalization of religions, beliefs or their followers to incite hatred and violence, in line with [commitment X](#) on “Faith for Rights” and Human Rights Council resolutions [16/18](#), [53/1](#) and [55/16](#).

In addition, the “Geneva100” meeting brought together religious leaders and faith-based actors, including from the Geneva Spiritual Appeal (on its 25th anniversary), International Committee of the Red Cross (on the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions), Geneva Inter-religious Platform, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the “Faith for Rights” network. In addition, participants discussed follow-up to the Practical Guide published by OHCHR and Equal Rights Trust on [Protecting Minority Rights](#), as well as collaboration with and among the current cohort of OHCHR [Minority Fellows](#) and the 2024 [International Contest for Minority Artists](#).

On 8 November 2024, the commUNITY of practices elaborated its rules of procedures (see [Annex 1](#)) and appointed a tetrarchy, chaired by a civil society coordinator and also composed of the focal points on programs, faith leaders and education.

As in previous years, OHCHR drafted this snapshot of peer-to-peer learning and action points, which was also shared with the tetrarchy and participants of the fifth annual meeting of the “Faith for Rights” commUNITY of practices.

II. Looking back

Participants shared a wealth of experience from their initiatives and projects based on the “Faith for Rights” framework and toolkit. Success factors and challenges include the following:

1. **Empathy** is essential to synergize the “[Faith for Rights](#)” commUNITY of practices and facilitate people working together. An attitude of solidarity and the advocacy for plural voices lie at the heart of applying the “Faith for Rights” framework in order to move away from polarized interreligious dialogues to inclusive interfaith action. As tension and distrust are growing between religious communities, especially since 7 October 2023, “Faith for Rights” initiatives should encourage faith-based actors to act in the spirit of empathy, reflect on their own positions and stand up for each other’s human rights.
2. “Faith for Rights” is not an organization but a **peer-to-peer learning movement** that has several key players. As a catalyst for change, it should promote more energy, synergy and agency at the grassroots levels while maintaining the momentum of global and regional initiatives. Interest from the local communities is the binding factor to put the “Faith for Rights” knowledge into practice. How to link the local levels’ experiences with the momentum at the international and regional levels?
3. At the heart of the “Faith for Rights” movement is **equal respect and acting together**. Religious leaders and faith actors need more tailored peer-to-peer learning and advocacy training to become familiar with human rights-based approaches and include them into faith practice. This is conducive to fighting any violent extremism targeting religious and belief communities, as well as any violent extremism in the name of religion or belief. In this regard, we can look more into microlevels and find out ways to continue supporting work by civil society and learn also from Asian, non-Abrahamic, agnostic and non-theistic values as well as spirituality of Indigenous Peoples. A mere “tolerance” is not enough: faith actors should learn how to respect and understand others. The commitment is not to use a one-size-fits-all model to lecture faith actors, but rather to facilitate the space for faith actors to reflect on how their own religions, beliefs and spirituality can be transformative. Participants raised questions for further discussion, for example:
 - a) What are the concrete examples of joint advocacy?
 - b) How to negotiate with religious or belief groups that refuse to share the principles of the “Faith for Rights” framework?
 - c) How to encourage faith actors to adapt the “Faith for Rights” framework to their local contexts, particularly in situations where arguments are heated and contentious and religions or beliefs are instrumentalized, while not undermining the baseline of human rights?
4. Religions and beliefs can play a positive role in **combatting discrimination against women**, and the key is human rights-based interpretation. “Faith for Rights” initiatives should engage more with religious leaders and faith actors through the peer-to-peer learning methodology of the #Faith4Rights toolkit and encourage them to make use of the examples of how religious and spiritual traditions can change the tide in a positive sense. It is our obligation to ensure that women who stay in their faith do not need to choose

between their faith or their human rights. An emphasis on “public conscience” (both under international humanitarian law and human rights law) as well as spiritual literacy is needed to deter the sprawl of violent extremism and discrimination against women. How to positively use the religious or belief traditions to counter negative, narrow and political interpretations which may divide us or contradict human rights?

5. **A safe space built upon caution and respect** can further constructive discussion and tackle the impasse in traditional interreligious dialogues. Faith actors are neither proxies nor representatives of anyone else. Rather, they should be able to speak for themselves without fear of intimidation, harassment or danger and to adopt the mindset of a “facilitator” that pushes them to listen more and recognize each other’s differences. Sometimes, a non-public manner of discussion is preferable to allow participants to share their genuine concerns, express their ingrained assumptions about others and point out the “elephant in the room”. Identifying any uncomfortable experience is the first step to see if we can find a collaborative answer. How can we bring the necessary caution and safety back to our own communities? Where can we find guidance and rules? What are the positive examples to deal with the “hot potato” questions?
6. **Engaging with children and youth** is vital to bring about change and support humanity. Critical thinking, spiritual literacy and knowledge of human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and jurisprudence of UN Treaty Bodies or Special Procedures, can equip the youth with tools to tackle religious misconceptions. How to support the youth to transform the learning outcome into specific projects that the communities and environment can benefit from? How to expand the “Faith for Rights” framework further to involve children in those key topics?
7. Integrating the “Faith for Rights” framework into **formal and informal education** has the huge potential to empower students and researchers from all backgrounds to develop their own projects, promote the framework in their environments and address the backlash against human rights protection. It should adopt the “human rights education” approach, using the #Faith4Rights toolkit in school settings that can involve human rights principles, including non-discrimination and freedom of religion or belief. The speciality of the #Faith4Rights toolkit is that it includes both religious and secular views and aims at making currently invisible rights indivisible. The first step might be to start from religious schools and to immerse people in others’ practices, celebrations and activities, and from there, participants can more easily adapt the curriculum in their education environment.
8. It is important to not forget the methodology of **ethics education** in the “Faith for Rights” framework. Spirituality must be linked with lived experiences and the focus on experiential methods can lead to a more inclusive “Faith for Rights” movement. Creative and artistic ways of communication, including case studies, storytelling, theatre performances, music, sports, role-play or other artistic workshops, help people identify who they are and “humanize” each other. Through creatively discussing examples how some political and religious leaders incite hatred and discrimination in inter-religious contexts, we may diffuse tensions and avoid being trapped by the “one evil” discourse. How can we

contribute our thoughts together to develop a more comprehensive guidance on using experiential methods in education? What adaptation should we make to the existing curriculum and methodology?

9. For the “Faith for Rights” framework to be more impactful, a **comprehensive approach** that incorporates international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law as well as different religious or belief traditions is also needed. How to adapt the “Faith for Rights” framework in the context of international humanitarian law, in particular during conflicts? How can we transform Islamic arguments into international law standards, preserving their tradition while also contributing to the dialogue? How can other spiritual perspectives, including from Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh traditions as well as Indigenous Peoples, also contribute to interpreting international humanitarian and human rights law?
10. The **instrumentalization of religions, beliefs and their followers** to incite hate speech is closely connected to religious nationalism. What is its relation to the incitement of hatred and violence – are they similar with each other? Can we imagine a process in which relevant UN treaty bodies and special procedures provide guidance on how to define and address instrumentalization of religions, beliefs and their followers? Participants shared some proposals, for example:
 - a) A collaborative approach involving coordination between UN Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and OHCHR could aim to provide soft law guidance, further to the [Rabat Plan of Action](#) and [Pact for the Future](#); other helpful guidance includes recent reports by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, such as [A/HRC/55/47](#) and [A/79/182](#).
 - b) Social media companies should encourage more interaction, inclusion and stick to international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the [Rabat six-part threshold test](#) as well as the Human Rights Committee’s jurisprudence, to address incitement to religious hatred.
 - c) Civil society organizations should also engage more with social media companies and oversight bodies, including by flagging content that incites to hatred or violence.
 - d) Research-wise, we need to create a space for analysing and discussing about the intersectionality of ignoring incitement to violence and the risk of genocide.
11. The understanding of “Faith for Rights” should be **inclusive, diverse and effective** as well as needs to be sensitive to how members of different religions, beliefs and traditions think and live. During the elaboration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the 1940s, Abrahamic religions were more influential in shaping the formulation of its article 18 on freedom of religion or belief. It was therefore felt that the perspectives and experiences of scholars from other religions or beliefs need to be incorporated in the discussions. Highlighting the example of conflict avoidance and consensus building through dialogue in the ASEAN region, it was suggested to host a “Faith for Rights” workshop or annual meeting in Asia (e.g. in Bangkok) in order to provide additional perspectives and enrich the #Faith4Rights toolkit (as a living document of the framework), particularly through Dharmic approaches and spirituality of Indigenous Peoples.

12. The “Faith for Rights” community can also **engage more with parliamentarians** to promote legislative and structural reform. Parliaments should be given more information and guidance on how to navigate through the intersection of human rights protection, including freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, belief, opinion, expression, association and peaceful assembly. We should first approach parliamentarians who are more sensitive to human rights protection, helping them better understand the related international legal norms and soft law standards.
13. In view of **regular meetings** by intergovernmental bodies and human rights experts, Geneva is an important city for “Faith for Rights” initiatives to strengthen its impact around the world. At the same time, the commUNity of practices should also hold its meetings and workshops in other cities and regions to enrich the discussions and actions. The coalition of “Faith for Rights” initiatives can be facilitated through the connections between local city councils, communities, governments, parliaments, courts, civil society and the international community.
14. The “Faith for Rights” framework is not only about **human rights but also covers duties** and responsibilities of various stakeholders. Some rights-holders may at the same time also be duty-bearers. Therefore, “faith actors for rights” and “rights for faith actors” are two sides of the same coin.

III. Faith for Rights initiatives

Participants showcased several academic and civil society initiatives that have been linked to, or are using, the peer-to-peer learning methodology of the #Faith4Rights toolkit:

1. [Spiritual Roots & Shared Wellbeing: Faith, Rights & Community Building in Times of Crisis](#) event in May 2024 and [video](#) (Anglia Ruskin University, Bridging Spiritual Cultures and University of Hertfordshire)
2. [Education for Co-existence: creating a university platform from the Faith for Rights community of practices](#) conference in May 2024 (American University of Paris, AUP)
3. [The Observatory on Human Rights at the United Nations](#), researching the impact of the 18 commitments and the #Faith4Rights toolkit in the practices of States and UN Treaty Bodies (University of Ottawa)
4. [University Diploma on Religions and Human Rights](#) (Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth)
5. [Gender Justice](#) Program and High Commissioner’s [video message](#) at the ACT Alliance General Assembly in Yogyakarta in October 2024 (ACT Alliance)
6. [Transcending Differences, Celebrating Diversity: What can we learn from ASEAN?](#) workshop in November 2024 (Dharma Alliance)
7. [Harnessing Hindu and Buddhist Sources as “Dictates of The Public Conscience”: A Gap-Filler to Address Sexual Violence Against Women During Conduct of Hostilities?, Henry Dunant Prize Research 2024](#) (LL.M. in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights thesis by Ritika Sharma at the Geneva Academy, supervised by Dr. Michael Wiener)

8. [Master on “Religion, Culture and Peace Studies”](#), including courses on Religion & Diplomacy and Countering Hate Speech (University for Peace, UPEACE)
9. [Postgraduate Diploma on Peaceful Existence](#) (UPEACE and GIOYA Higher Education Institution, in partnership with King Hamad Global Center for Peaceful Coexistence)
10. [Gandhi-King Global Academy online course](#) on “Religions, Beliefs, and Human Rights: A ‘Faith for Rights’ Approach” (United States Institute of Peace, Religions for Peace, UPEACE, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and OHCHR)
11. [“Faith for Rights: Empowering Faith Community Leaders to Protect Human Rights”](#), online course by the Department for Continuing Education (University of Oxford), tutored by Rabbi Alex Goldberg
12. [Faith and Gender Justice Fellowship](#), Office of Religious Life (Princeton University)
13. [Global Ethics Forum](#), including the September 2024 [panel discussion](#) on how can ethical and spiritual leaders contribute to reconciliation and lives’ saving (Globethics)
14. [Addressing the rise in global hatred on the basis of religion or belief](#) (Wilton Park, in partnership with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Office of International Religious Freedom of the US Department of State) and [A Euro-MENA Dialogue on Inclusive Citizenship and Freedom of Religion and Belief: Bridging and advancing the two agendas](#) (Wilton Park, in partnership with the British and Italian Governments, the Adyan Foundation and Globethics)
15. [#FaithforRights Program in Portugal](#) (International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, Ius Gentium Center for Human Rights at the University of Coimbra)
16. [Bellwether International’s Community-based Approach to Disrupt the Cycle of Genocide and “Faith for Rights” symposium in Nigeria](#) (Bellwether International)
17. [Webinar on Understanding and Upholding Freedom of Religion or Belief](#), [IPU Self-Assessment toolkit](#), [Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians](#) and [MOOC on Freedom of Expression](#) and [Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue](#) in Marrakesh and the forthcoming [Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue](#) in Rome (Inter-Parliamentary Union)
18. [International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief](#) (IPPFoRB)
19. [Training of imams in France and drafting of a glossary](#) (Grand Mosque of Paris)
20. [Knowledge-building movement](#) for Islamic studies to advocate for equality and non-discrimination (Musawah)
21. [Paix Shalom Salam – Déclaration automne 2023](#) and [9 propositions pour vivre ensemble et se respecter dans la diversité religieuse](#) (Plateforme interreligieuse de Genève, PFIR)
22. Music inspired by the “Faith for Rights” framework, presented during the annual meeting on 6 November 2024 (at the [International School of Geneva](#)), on 7 November 2024 (by [Luis De La Calle Foundation](#)) and on 8 November 2024 (at [Temple de Jussy](#))

23. Side events and panel discussions on [Combatting Intolerance, Hate Crimes and Islamophobia](#) (October 2024), [Combating Antisemitism in the Context of Football](#) (June 2024) and the [Role of Youth Faith Actors in Combating Hate Speech and Creating More Inclusive Societies](#) (June 2024)
24. [#Faith4Rights toolkit](#), second edition available online in Chinese, English, French and Spanish (OHCHR)
25. [Protecting Minority Rights through Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation](#), practical guide (available in 8 languages) and rollout (Equal Rights Trust and OHCHR)
26. [Minority Fellowship Programme](#), including for persons belonging to religious or belief minorities (OHCHR)
27. [International Contest for Minority Artists](#) (OHCHR, Freemuse, Minority Rights Group International, City of Geneva and Centre des Arts of the International School of Geneva)

IV. Looking ahead

1. **Continue exchanges among the participants** of the peer-to-peer workshops and annual meetings through the “[Faith for Rights](#)” commUNITY of practices along the following activities and ideas:
 - a) Raising the “Faith for Rights” framework during the forthcoming [roundtable discussions](#) at the Grand Mosque of Paris on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November 2025);
 - b) An introduction to make people aware of the consistency between long-term peer-to-peer events and understand the difference between various partnerships or events;
 - c) National or regional forums in different parts of the world to facilitate the quarterly peer-to-peer community of practice;
 - d) Follow-up ideas on a more regular basis for peer-to-peer learning exchanges;
 - e) Continue efforts within the [Inter-religious Platform of Geneva](#), applying the “Faith for Rights” framework in the city, for example with the [annual walks](#) around Human Rights Day from Geneva to Collonges-sous-Salève, and see how we can coordinate with related initiatives in other cities;
 - f) Launch a global information site on how to facilitate difficult issues, this should be the priority of strategy that someone can help facilitate the facilitators at local levels, connecting international discussion with local experiences;
 - g) The “Faith for Rights” framework combines a soft law standard and an interfaith movement, relying on facilitators’ training and facilitation at local levels.
2. Further cooperation to develop the **inter-university “Faith for Rights” platform** that congregates academic resources and tools on promoting human rights in religious communities and functions as a “network for networks”:

- a) Principles include openness, impartiality, inclusivity and accessibility to everyone, aiming to not sabotage creativity and encourage people to speak and share comfortably;
 - b) Syllabi, curricula, positive precedents, opportunities for scholarships, fellowships, and internships, etc. shared by faith actors all around the world; it can also be a platform for people to learn from each other and share difficult questions they face when promoting human rights protection in religious or belief communities;
 - c) Research relevant to the “Faith for Rights” framework conducted by one entity can be uploaded to the platform and disseminated by other entities, and quarterly publication may be an option to facilitate it;
 - d) Centralize course materials and hyperlinks, and make sure that the courses from different entities can be linked with each other;
 - e) Fundraising of the platform does not operate in a traditional and centralized manner; rather, entities supporting the hub can contribute to fundraising in a cooperative way;
 - f) Constant and stable cooperation among academic institutions that support this hub to facilitate the participation of students;
 - g) Links to other platforms, including the webpages <https://faith4rights.academy> and <https://www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights/framework-action>;
3. Enhance the integration of the “Faith for Rights” framework into **education**:
- a) Design shared tools for schools from different parts of the world, connected to the inter-university “Faith for Rights” platform (see above);
 - b) Community-building events held at university campuses can invite teachers and students from local primary and secondary schools to participate and mix with university students (consent from parents and schools is needed);
 - c) Highlight the multinational nature of the educational program if possible, enabling engagement with international scholars and practitioners from diverse contexts and bringing participants to critically discuss sensitive topics;
 - d) Educational program that works under the “Faith for Rights” framework should be multidimensional, furnishing more opportunities for internships, legal studies about religions or beliefs and other community work to facilitate research that yields impact;
 - e) Good examples of educational programs, including the contact information of scholars organizing them and the syllabus, should be shared within the “Faith for Rights” commUNity of practices so that faith actors do not need to reinvent the wheel;
 - f) For current courses, we can draw on them and build a more inclusive and cohesive structure to implement the education; online webinars on religious studies that are connected to the quarterly peer-to-peer practice meetings may be an option;
 - g) Global conferences where students and participants can meet each other are desirable, enabling them to present academic or research work;

- h) Experimental education is a way to combine theoretical and practical work in religious education and should be highlighted; participants should attend the commUNity of practices and engage with the practical and unpredictable environment so that they can develop resilience;
 - i) It is important to maintain the autonomy of various courses tailored to different audiences; to ensure the success of interaction, wise selection of the participants to make sure they have diverse profiles and can bring different perspectives into the discussion is the key;
4. Around the '**Geneva 100' model**, the "Faith for Rights" framework can strengthen its impact around the world, starting from Geneva:
- a) Key instruments of the 'Geneva 100' model are the ["Faith for Rights" framework](#), [#Faith4Rights toolkit](#), [Beirut Declaration](#), [Rabat Plan of Action](#), [9 propositions](#), [Geneva Spiritual Appeal](#) as well as international humanitarian law standards from the perspective of the ICRC;
 - b) Geneva has the potential to become a global city hub, and Cathédrale Saint-Pierre may be a place in Geneva to convene (as already for the [Geneva Spiritual Appeal](#) of 24 October 1999 and for the ["Recueillement Interreligieux – Un an de souffrances"](#) on 7 October 2024) because it provides a good opportunity for people to come together, pray together and reconcile positions;
 - c) A proposal of sister cities may be taken into action, where delegations from Geneva and other cities coordinate with each other under the "Faith for Rights" framework to spread the 'Geneva 100' model;
 - d) Strengthen the role of the Geneva Inter-faith Platform, and launch more joint prayer activities and annual "Faith for Rights" walks ([A/HRC/40/58](#), annex I, para. 12).
5. The scope and understanding of "Faith for Rights" should be **inclusive and diverse**:
- a) Global cooperation to promote inter-religious understanding and dialogue should stick to a non-partisan stance, and adopt the [six-part threshold test](#) if needed;
 - b) Exchanges for informal dialogues and webinars with parliamentarians are needed; further, parliaments can support research and analysis on the topic of freedom of religion or belief in their national context, based on international human rights norms and standards;
 - c) The agenda for the next annual meeting could include a discussion about religions, beliefs and spirituality, including from Hindu, Buddhist or other Dharmic groups rooted in ancient spiritual traditions, and from the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples;
 - d) The #Faith4Rights toolkit is open for updating and including experiences from peer-to-peer learning exchanges and part of the annual meeting could discuss this;
 - e) Members of the commUNity of practices should undertake to declare, accept and promote the "Faith for Rights" framework.

6. The “Faith for Rights” **soft law instrument** should continue to be used at the international and regional levels. For example, the [EU Gender Action Plan III](#) calls on the European Union to support mobilisation of religious actors for gender equality in line with the “Faith for Rights” framework. It has also been referred to by the [UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#) (in its most recent General Recommendation No. 40 on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems), the [UN Human Rights Committee](#) (General Comment No. 37 on the right of peaceful assembly) and several Special Rapporteurs (in their communications¹ and thematic reports) as well as at the regional level by the [Council of Europe](#) (Recommendation on combating hate speech), [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#) (Guide on fostering dialogue and joint action across religious and belief boundaries) and [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) (Report on freedom of religion or belief).
7. Through dialogue-based responses, facilitators implementing the “Faith for Rights” framework on campus can create a **safe space for students to debate**, in which there should be no forcible reprimand of peaceful assembly and opinions. In this regard, religious and spiritual literacy as well as human rights literacy are important to help alleviating any tensions.
8. The [Beirut Declaration](#) and its [18 commitments](#) on “Faith for Rights” (currently available online in 13 languages) and [#Faith4Rights toolkit](#) (currently available in four languages) should be **freely accessible in as many languages as possible**, showing respect for linguistic diversity, especially in terms of education. For example, we need to promote the universality of the toolkit, including in languages used by religious or belief minorities and Indigenous Peoples.



¹ <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26573>;
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26763>;
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26833>;
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28623>;
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29435>.

Annex 1: Faith for Rights commUNity of practices

The participants of the OHCHR peer-to-peer learning week workshops, in its fourth edition held in Geneva, both in-person and virtually, from 6 to 10 November 2023 decided to establish a network, entitled “Faith for Rights commUNity of practices”. During its fifth edition from 4 to 8 November 2024, they also elaborated its rules of procedure as outlined below.



Overarching goal:

To ensure continuity and mutual reinforcement among faith-based actors who contribute to the implementation of the United Nations “Faith for Rights” framework and toolkit in situations where human rights and religion or belief have to be bridged and where “faith” can stand up for human rights.

Objectives:

- To strengthen faith-based actors’ ability to promote and protect all human rights for all;
- To enhance joint inter-faith action, beyond mere interreligious dialogue;
- To manage and share the knowledge generated by an expanded group of experts and practitioners on all matters related to the Faith4Rights framework and toolkit;
- To regularly inject such knowledge into the work of relevant regional and international human rights mechanisms, including UN Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and the Universal Periodic Review, given their engagement with States;
- To learn and collect experiences from practitioners implementing the “Faith for Rights” framework and toolkit (“Faith4Rights super-users”) and make them accessible to other users of the “Faith for Rights” framework;
- To generate and disseminate, both to States and faith-based actors, through relevant mandated reports by both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, promising practices of civil society organizations, academia and other actors in the area of faith and human rights, and thus, generate and manage knowledge from practitioners on bridging religion and human rights;
- To share such knowledge in direct engagement with States, including at the Istanbul process annual events as well as States reviews under the treaty body monitoring system and the UPR, in order to enhance the optimal implementation of all international human rights norms and standards related to or affected by religion or beliefs;

- To engage directly with UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures mandate holders to draw on the jurisprudence, recommendations and authority of these bodies in support of activities under the “Faith for Rights” framework.

Main activities:

- Support the implementation of activities under the “Faith for Rights” framework and/or using the #Faith4Rights framework in any context globally, where interpretation of religious norms might cause human rights violations or at least hamper or create tension with universally established human rights norms and standards;
- Organize annual meetings for exchange of experiences through peer-to-peer learning, analysing challenges and benefiting from opportunities in the implementation of activities under the “Faith for Rights” framework in both closed and public settings;
- Analyse trends and setbacks in the protection and promotion of human rights on the basis of or in the name of religion or belief, and compile good examples, to be made available within the “Faith for Rights” commUNITY of practices and beyond with a view to achieving a sustainable cumulative effect of the generated knowledge, lessons and skills;
- Foster regular exchange among the members, with the aim to provide advice to each other in the implementation of activities under the “Faith for Rights” framework in diverse contexts at the international, regional, national and local levels.

Membership:

The commUNITY of practices has been convened by OHCHR and is managed by civil society organisations themselves, faith-based actors, academia and other practitioners of the “Faith for Rights” framework.

To participate in the commUNITY of practices, faith-based organizations and individual practitioners can submit a request to OHCHR to join and agree to contribute to the community by:

- Respecting and abiding by the “Faith for Rights” framework, notably the five fundamental principles outlined in the Beirut Declaration (UN Doc. [A/HRC/40/58](#), annex I, para. 10) and the 18 commitments (UN Doc. [A/HRC/40/58](#), annex II).
- Accepting to serve as Coordinator of the commUNITY of practices for a term of one year (on a rotational basis);
- Organising or at least participating in a peer-to-peer learning session at least once per year;
- Making a symbolic financial donation or an in-kind contribution to the strategic objectives of the commUNITY of practices;
- Participating in the Istanbul Process meeting or submitting information on the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 16/18;
- Contributing to annual reports and joint initiatives of the commUNITY of practices.

The commUNity of practices shall open its membership, upon recommendation by its members or direct requests by interested stakeholders, with a view to represent the largest possible diversity of religions and beliefs and to integrate diverse actors and activists who implement the “Faith for Rights” framework in various contexts. The commUNity of practices shall exercise due diligence, with the help of OHCHR, to ensure that new members of the community have not been associated with human rights violations. New members will have to pledge to always observe the principles of integrity and respect as well as the purposes and objectives of the UN Charter.

Members should observe the Beirut Declaration, notably by “Building on the present declaration, we also intend to practice what we preach through establishing a multi-level coalition, open for all independent religious actors and faith-based organisations who genuinely demonstrate acceptance of and commitment to the present Faith for Rights declaration by implementing projects on the ground in areas that contribute to achieving its purpose. We will also be charting a roadmap for concrete actions in specific areas, to be reviewed regularly by our global coalition of Faith for Rights.

10. To achieve the above goal, we pledge as believers (whether theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other) to fully adhere to **five fundamental principles**:

- a) Transcending traditional inter-faith dialogues into **concrete action-oriented Faith for Rights (F4R) projects** at the local level. While dialogue is important, it is not an end in itself. Good intentions are of limited value without corresponding action. Change on the ground is the goal and concerted action is its logical means.
 - *“Faith is grounded in the heart when it is demonstrated by deeds.”* (Hadith)
- b) **Avoiding theological and doctrinal divides** in order to act on areas of shared inter-faith and intra-faith vision as defined in the present Faith for Rights declaration. This declaration is not conceived to be a tool for dialogue among religions but rather a joint platform for common action in defence of human dignity for all. While we respect freedom of expression and entertain no illusion as to the continuation of a level of controversy at different levels of religious discourse, we are resolved to challenge the manipulation of religions in both politics and conflicts. We intend to be a balancing united voice of solidarity, reason, compassion, moderation, enlightenment and corresponding collective action at the grassroots level.
- c) **Introspectiveness** is a virtue we cherish. We will all speak up and act first and foremost on our own weaknesses and challenges within our respective communities. We will address more global issues collectively and consistently, after internal and inclusive deliberation that preserves our most precious strength, i.e. integrity.
- d) **Speaking with one voice**, particularly against any advocacy of hatred that amounts to inciting violence, discrimination or any other violation of the equal dignity that all human beings enjoy regardless of their religion, belief, gender, political or other opinion, national or social origin, or any other status. Denouncing incitement to hatred, injustices, discrimination on religious grounds or any form of religious intolerance is not enough. We have a duty to redress hate speech by remedial compassion and solidarity that heals hearts and societies alike. Our words of redress should transcend

religious or belief boundaries. Such boundaries should thus no longer remain a free land for manipulators, xenophobes, populists and violent extremists.

- e) We are resolved to **act in a fully independent manner**, abiding only by our conscience, while seeking partnerships with religious and secular authorities, relevant governmental bodies and non-State actors wherever Faith for Rights coalitions are freely established in conformity with the present declaration.”²

Facilitation:

The commUNity of practices shall be facilitated by a **tetrarchy**, chaired by a Coordinator and also composed of a Programs focal point, an Education focal point and a Faith focal point. The tetrarchy should be gender-balanced and is elected for a term of one year (renewable) by the members of the commUNity of practices participating in the respective annual meeting.

The role of the **commUNity of practices Coordinator** shall be defined by the community at large, based on self-nominations with the understanding that this responsibility will be equally shared on a rotational basis among all members. The commUNity of practices Coordinator serves for a term of one year and is responsible to:

- Coordinate with OHCHR representatives, including the UN Faith for Rights staff;
- Help to plan (and seek funding for) the annual peer-to-peer learning session;
- Collate and present an annual report on Faith4Rights learning and applications, including a roadmap for concrete actions in specific areas;
- Facilitate networking and information sharing among the community stakeholders, including through a biannual newsletter;
- Present the activities of the commUNity of practices at relevant conferences, workshops and meetings, without speaking on behalf of the whole community;
- Prepare and help the next Coordinator transition into the role.

The **commUNity of practices Programs focal point** also serves for a term of one year and is responsible to:

- Suggest to the commUNity of practices, in collaboration with the Coordinator, related faithbased projects at the local, national, regional and global levels, in line with the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”;
- Facilitate the implementation of agreed projects in collaboration with the commUNity of practices Coordinator and OHCHR representatives, including the UN Faith for Rights staff;
- Provide inputs to the Coordinator’s annual report on Faith4Rights learning and applications;

² <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/40/58>, Annex I, paras. 9-10.

- Provide inputs to the biannual newsletter, including good practices and lessons learned;
- Prepare and help the next Programs focal point transition into the role.

The **commUNity of practices Education focal point** also serves for a term of one year and is responsible to:

- Suggest to the commUNity of practices, in collaboration with the Coordinator, sustained partnerships with specialised academic institutions so as to promote interdisciplinary research and education on specific questions related to faith and rights and to benefit from their outcomes that could feed into the programs, tools and teaching materials of the commUNity of practices, in line with the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”;
- Facilitate the implementation of educational initiatives in collaboration with the commUNity of practices Coordinator and OHCHR representatives, including the UN Faith for Rights staff;
- Provide inputs to the Coordinator’s annual report on Faith4Rights learning and applications;
- Provide inputs to the biannual newsletter, including good practices and lessons learned;
- Prepare and help the next Education focal point transition into the role.

The **commUNity of practices Faith focal point** also serves for a term of one year and is responsible to:

- Suggest to the commUNity of practices, in collaboration with the Coordinator, networking activities among religious leaders and faith-based actors to support each other at the implementation level of the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”, including through exchange of practices, mutual capacity enhancement and regular activities of skills updating for religious and spiritual preachers;
- Facilitate the implementation of faith-based networking activities in collaboration with the commUNity of practices Coordinator and OHCHR representatives, including the UN Faith for Rights staff;
- Provide inputs to the Coordinator’s annual report on faith-based networking activities;
- Provide inputs to the biannual newsletter, including good practices and lessons learned;
- Prepare and help the next Faith focal point transition into the role.

At the conclusion of the fifth annual meeting on 8 November 2024, the commUNITY of practices **appointed the following members** to serve until the sixth annual meeting in the following functions:

- **Coordinator:** Ibrahim Salama (ibrahimsalama1959@gmail.com)
- **Programs focal point:** Rachel Miner (rachel@bellwetherngo.org)
- **Education focal point:** Tanya Elder (telder@aup.edu)
- **Faith focal point:** Rabbi Alexander Goldberg (alex.goldberg@surrey.ac.uk)

Annex 2: Hyperlinks shared during the fifth annual meeting

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights>

<https://www.usip.org/academy/catalog/religions-beliefs-and-human-rights-faith-rights-approach>

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FC%2FGC%2F40&Lang=en

<https://undocs.org/e/cn.4/2002/73/add.2>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/religion/faithforrights/faith4rights-berlin-panel-2024.pdf>

<https://www.aidlr.org/news103.php>

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sotf-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf

<https://www.ecolint-cda.ch/en/our-events/arts-minorities-and-human-rights>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/france-hijab-bans-sports-are-discriminatory-and-must-be-reversed-say-experts>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5547-hatred-basis-religion-or-belief-special-rapporteur-freedom>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a79182-peace-and-freedom-religion-or-belief-special-rapporteur-freedom>

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/49/86>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-all-forms-intolerance-and-discrimination>

<https://www.bellwetherngo.org/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-religion-or-belief>

<https://associazionedeluca.it>

<https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/toolkits/2023-10/parliaments-and-human-rights-self-assessment-toolkit>

<https://www.ipu.org/about-ipu/structure-and-governance/governing-council/committee-human-rights-parliamentarians>

<https://www.ipu.org/massive-open-online-course-freedom-expression-parliaments-and-their-member>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/freedom-of-expression>

<https://www.humanium.org/en/text-2/>

<https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/geneva-conventions-and-their-commentaries>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/policy-and-methodological-publications/protecting-minority-rights-practical-guide>